

Wayne Allard

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SENATE COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON ALLARD'S ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY BILL BILL WILL ALLOW BUREAU OF RECLAMATION TO PROVIDE MONEY FOR ENDANGERED FISH RECOVERY PROGRAMS ON COLORADO

Washington, D.C. - The Energy and Natural Resources Water and Power Subcommittee conducted a hearing on Tuesday, April 25, concerning U.S. Senator Wayne Allard's (R-CO) Endangered Fish Recovery Bill (S. 2239). The legislation would authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to provide cost sharing for the endangered fish recovery implementation programs for the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River basins.

"This legislation is the product of years of meetings between water districts, power users, state and federal government and environmental groups," Allard said. "The goal of the program is to recover endangered species while continuing to meet future water supply needs in the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico."

Testifying in support of S. 2239 were Eluid Martinez, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, Leslie James, Executive Director of the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, Greg Walcher, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Randy Kirkpatrick, Executive Director of the San Juan Water Commission and Dan Luecke, Regional Director of the Environmental Defense Fund.

"This legislation and the Colorado and San Juan River recovery programs are of the utmost importance to the State of Colorado," said Greg Walcher, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. "These recovery programs present the only viable long-term solutions to complying with the Endangered Species Act and protecting the rights of our citizens."

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Allard's legislation is supported by the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico. Supporters also include the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program, the Environmental Defense Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, the Colorado River Water Conservation District, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Colorado Water Congress.

"The names of the groups that Senator Allard has brought to the table to deal with this problem is nothing short of amazing," said Senator Ben Campbell (R-CO) who is a Subcommittee member and original cosponsor of the bill. "You have water users and oil companies on one side and environmental groups on the other side, who usually mix like cats and dogs, all supporting this bill."

The Endangered Fish Recovery bill will now be considered by the full Senate Energy Committee.

"It is critical to affirm the federal government's commitment to the implementation of the Recovery Programs," Allard concluded. "The bill reflects compromise on all sides of the issue and recognizes that protection of endangered species can coincide with water development and water use."

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